



U.S. Department of
Transportation
Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION:** Department of Transportation (DOT)
Plans for Evaluating Discretionary Project Proposals

Date: MAR 22 2019

From: Keith Washington *Keep working*
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, M-1

Reply to:
Attn. of

To: U.S. Department of Transportation Financial Assistance
Management Operating Administrations and Secretarial
Offices

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has made recommendations regarding the Department's implementation of its discretionary grant programs, including documenting key evaluation and project selection decisions.¹ All Operating Administrations (OAs) and Secretarial Offices (SOs) involved in the Discretionary Financial Assistance process, with the cooperation and assistance of the Office of the Secretary as needed, are to immediately implement the following actions:

- Develop a plan for evaluating project proposals in advance of issuing Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO)² that define the stages in the process and how the process will be overseen to ensure a consistent review of applications.
- Document key decisions, including the reason for any rating changes and the officials responsible for those changes, and how high-level concerns raised during the process will be addressed.
- Align stated program purpose and policy priorities with the evaluation and selection process.

OAs and SOs will ensure that the three requirements above are included in its policies and procedures by June 30, 2019. Please send a copy of your updated and approved policies to Audrey Clarke, Audrey.clarke@dot.gov, Associate Director, Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight Division, Office of the Senior Procurement Executive, 202-366-4268, by June 30, 2019.

¹GAO, *DOT Discretionary Grants: Problems with Hurricane Sandy Transit Grant Selection Process Highlight the Need for Additional Accountability*, GAO-17-20, December 14, 2016.

²As specified in 2 CFR 200, Appendix I Full text of Notice of Funding Opportunity